

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for operating a computer to facilitate a choice of a financing product for financing an energy-related asset, said method comprising the steps of:

 prompting a customer ~~to provide information related to a financing requirement to~~
input into the computer information describing the energy-related asset for which financing is
being sought, wherein the energy-related asset including at least one of a power generating
facility, a refinery, a mine, and a pipeline;

 prompting the customer to input into the computer responses to a plurality of
questions regarding requirements for financing the energy-related asset;

 analyzing the information inputted into the computer by the customer; and

 ~~determining a proper financing product based upon provided information; and~~

 ~~prompting the customer with a recommendation for a financing product~~

 recommending to the customer based on the analyzed information a type of financing
to be used by the customer for financing the energy-related asset, wherein the financing types
include financing project, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited
partnership, private equity and preferred equity.

2. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step
of:

 displaying a computer generated screen listing ~~a plurality of the financing type~~
~~selections; types;~~

enabling the customer to select a financing type to be evaluated by the computer; and

 determining whether the selected financing type is the recommended financing type.

3. (currently amended) A method according to ~~Claim 2~~ Claim 1 further comprising
the steps of: wherein said financing type selections comprise at least one of project finance,

~~high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.~~

enabling the customer to select a financing type to be evaluated by the computer;
accessing an equity valuation tool if the customer inputs project common equity as the
financing type; and
calculating an equity valuation using the equity valuation tool and information
inputted by the customer, wherein the calculated equity valuation relates to the energy-related
asset.

4. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 3 further comprising wherein
for a project common equity financing type selection, prompting the customer to provide
information ~~comprises the step of displaying a computer generated screen prompting the~~
~~customer to enter criteria to value the equity in their property~~ describing the energy-related
asset including an energy output of the asset.

5. (currently amended) A method according to claim 4 wherein the ~~property energy-~~
related asset is a power generation plant, ~~the criteria requested being at least one of and the~~
information provided by the customer describing the energy-related asset includes power
plant information, current financing information, projected electricity prices and projected
fuel costs.

6. (original) A method according to Claim 5 wherein default values are available for
at least one of projected electricity prices and projected fuel costs, when specific values are
not provided.

7. (original) A method according to Claim 3 further comprising the step of
displaying a computer generated screen describing a selected financing type.

8. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein prompting the
customer to ~~provide information~~ input responses comprises the steps of:

displaying a computer generated screen listing a plurality of background questions relating to the financing requirement; and

displaying a computer generated screen listing a plurality of financing specific questions.

9. (original) A method according to Claim 8, wherein the background questions relating to the financing requirement comprise at least one of the country where financing is required, which energy related business is the financing for, is the financing required for an operating asset, are U.S. taxes currently being paid by the customer, is the customer interested in either of off-balance sheet or non-recourse financing, and is the customer interested in structured debt such as high yield debt or subordinated debt.

10. (original) A method according to Claim 8, wherein the financing specific questions comprise at least one of amount of financing, selling or optimizing equity position, willing to share control, upside potential and residuals of the asset, willing to subordinate equity distribution to a preferred equity investor, willing to be contacted regarding the financing, early stage pre-IPO company or company in early stage of corporate cycle and interested in financing senior to common equity but junior to lenders and trade creditors.

11. (currently amended) A computer for facilitating a selection of a financing product for financing an energy-related asset, said computer programmed to:

prompt a customer to provide information related to a financing requirement;

prompt a customer ~~to provide information related to a financing requirement~~ to input information describing the energy-related asset for which financing is being sought, wherein the energy-related asset including at least one of a power generating facility, a refinery, a mine, and a pipeline;

prompt the customer to input responses to a plurality of questions regarding requirements for financing the energy-related asset;

analyze the information inputted by the customer; and
~~determine a proper financing product for the customer; and~~
~~prompt the customer with an inquiry as to whether they wish to pursue financing~~
~~opportunities~~

recommend to the customer based on the analyzed information a type of financing to
be used by the customer for financing the energy-related asset, wherein the financing types
include financing project, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited
partnership, private equity and preferred equity.

12. (currently amended) A computer according to Claim 11 further programmed to:
display a computer generated screen listing ~~a plurality of~~ the financing type
~~selections. types:~~

enable the customer to select a financing type to be evaluated; and
determine whether the selected financing type is the recommended financing type.

13. (currently amended) A computer according to ~~Claim 12~~ Claim 11 wherein the
computer is further programmed to: wherein said financing type selections comprise at least
one of project finance, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership,
private equity and preferred equity.

enable the customer to select a financing type to be evaluated;
access an equity valuation tool if the customer inputs project common equity as the
financing type; and

calculate an equity valuation using the equity valuation tool and information inputted
by the customer, wherein the calculated equity valuation relates to the energy-related asset.

14. (currently amended) A computer according to Claim 13 wherein for a project
common equity financing type selection, said computer displays, to the customer, a prompt to

enter criteria to ~~value the equity in their property~~ describing the energy-related asset including an energy output of the asset.

15. (currently amended) A computer according to claim 14 wherein the prompt is an interface to a valuation tool for power generation plants, and the criteria ~~requested being~~ including at least one of power plant information, current financing information, projected electricity prices and projected fuel costs.

16. (original) A computer according to Claim 15 wherein default values for at least one of projected electricity prices and projected fuel costs are available.

17. (original) A computer according to Claim 13, whereupon a selection of a financing type by the customer, said computer programmed to display, to the customer, a computer generated screen describing the selected financing type.

18. (original) A computer according to Claim 11, wherein to prompt the customer to provide information, said computer:

displays a computer generated screen listing a plurality of background questions relating to the financing requirement; and

displays a computer generated screen listing a plurality of financing specific questions upon entry of answers to background questions.

19. (original) A computer according to Claim 18, wherein the background questions relating to the financing requirement comprise at least one of the country where financing is required, which energy related business is the financing for, is the financing required for an operating asset, are U.S. taxes currently being paid by the customer, is the customer interested in either of off-balance sheet or non-recourse financing, and is the customer interested in structured debt such as high yield debt or subordinated debt.

20. (original) A computer according to Claim 18, wherein the financing specific questions comprise at least one of amount of financing, selling or optimizing equity position,

willing to share control, upside potential and residuals of the asset, willing to subordinate equity distribution to a preferred equity investor, willing to be contacted regarding the financing, early stage pre-IPO company or company in early stage of corporate cycle and interested in financing senior to common equity but junior to lenders and trade creditors.

21. (withdrawn) A database comprising:

data corresponding to answers to questions relating to a customers financing requirement; and

data corresponding to a recommended financing type for the customer.

22. (withdrawn) A database according to Claim 21 wherein data corresponding to answers further comprises data corresponding to answers to at least one of background questions and financing specific questions relating to the customers financing requirement.

23. (withdrawn) A database according to Claim 21 further comprising data corresponding to a valuation of one or more facilities.

24. (withdrawn) A database according to Claim 23 wherein the facilities are power generation plants.

25. (withdrawn) A database according to Claim 21 further comprising data corresponding to default values for electricity prices and fuel costs.

26. (withdrawn) A database according to Claim 21 further comprising data corresponding to a description of available financing types.

27. (withdrawn) A system for facilitating financing transactions, said system comprising:

a database comprising data corresponding to available financing type selections; and

a server configured to prompt a customer to type and to prompt the customer provide answers to questions relating to a financing requirement.

28. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 27 wherein said database further comprises data corresponding to answers to at least one of background questions and financing specific questions relating to the customers financing requirement.

29. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 27 wherein said database further comprises data corresponding to a valuation of one or more facilities.

30. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 29 wherein the facilities are power generation plants.

31. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 27 wherein said server is configured to cause a screen listing a plurality of available financing type selections to be displayed at a client computer.

32. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 31 wherein the financing type selections comprise at least one of project finance, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.

33. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 32 wherein for a project common equity financing type, said server causes to be displayed at a client computer a screen prompting the customer to enter criteria to value the equity in their facility.

34. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 33 wherein said server is configured to generate a valuation of equity in a facility based upon customer entered criteria.

35. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 33 wherein the valuation criteria includes at least one of the plant size, a heat rate, a percentage of revenues under contract, a number of years remaining under contract, a remaining term of the existing debt, an outstanding principal, interest rate, electricity prices and an annual rate of increase, and projections of prices and projected fuel costs including an escalator.

36. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 35 wherein said database further comprises data corresponding to default values for electricity prices and projected fuel costs.

37. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 36 wherein said server is configured to use default values for at least one of electricity prices and projected fuel costs based upon customer entered valuation criteria.

38. (withdrawn) A method for initiating a financing transaction for a facility, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting, from an electronic interface, a financing type;

entering, into the electronic interface, contact information and information regarding the financing transaction; and

requesting, from the electronic interface, a further contact regarding the financing.

39. (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 38 wherein the financing types comprise at least one of project finance, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.

40. (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 38 wherein for a project common equity financing type, said method further comprises the step of entering, into the electronic interface, criteria for valuation of the facility.

41. (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 40 wherein criteria for valuation of the facility comprises at least one of the plant size, a heat rate, a percentage of revenues under contract, a number of years remaining under contract, a remaining term of the existing debt, an outstanding principal, interest rate, electricity prices and an annual rate of increase, and projections of prices and projected fuel costs including an escalator.

42. (withdrawn) A method for determining a proper financing type for a facility, said method comprising the steps of:

entering, into an electronic interface, answers to background questions and answers to financing specific questions regarding the financing requirement; and

requesting, from the electronic interface, a financing type recommendation.

43. (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 42 wherein the background questions comprises at least one of the country where financing is required, which energy related business is the financing for, is the financing required for an operating asset, are U.S. taxes currently being paid by the customer, is the customer interested in either of off-balance sheet or non-recourse financing, and is the customer interested in structured debt such as high yield debt or subordinated debt.

44. (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 42 wherein the financing specific questions comprise at least one of amount of financing, selling or optimizing equity position, willing to share control, upside potential and residuals of the asset, willing to subordinate equity distribution to a preferred equity investor, willing to be contacted regarding the financing, early stage pre-IPO company or company in early stage of corporate cycle and interested in financing senior to common equity but junior to lenders and trade creditors.

45. (currently amended) Apparatus for facilitating a selection of a financing product for financing an energy-related asset, said apparatus comprising:

means for prompting a customer to select a financing type to input information describing the energy-related asset for which financing is being sought, wherein the energy-related asset including at least one of a power generating facility, a refinery, a mine, and a pipeline;

means for prompting the customer to input responses to a plurality of questions regarding requirements for financing the energy-related asset;

means for analyzing the information inputted into the computer by the customer; and

~~means for prompting the customer to provide information related to a financing requirement; and~~

~~means for prompting the customer with an inquiry as to whether they wish to pursue financing opportunities~~

means for recommending to the customer based on the analyzed information a type of financing to be used by the customer for financing the energy-related asset, wherein the financing types include financing project, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.

46. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 45 ~~wherein said means for prompting a customer to select a financing type comprises means for displaying a computer generated screen listing a plurality of financing types.~~ further comprising:

means for displaying a computer generated screen listing the financing types;
means for enabling the customer to select a financing type to be evaluated; and
means for determining whether the selected financing type is the recommended financing type.

47. (currently amended) Apparatus according to ~~Claim 46~~ Claim 45 further comprising: ~~wherein said financing types comprise at least one of project finance, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.~~

means for enabling the customer to select a financing type to be evaluated;
means for accessing an equity valuation tool if the customer inputs project common equity as the financing type; and
means for calculating an equity valuation using the equity valuation tool and information inputted by the customer, wherein the calculated equity valuation relates to the energy-related asset.

48. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 47 further comprising ~~wherein~~ for project common equity financing type selection, said means for prompting the customer to provide information ~~displays a computer generated screen prompting the customer to enter information for a valuation of a facility~~ describing the energy-related asset including an energy output of the asset.

49. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 48 wherein ~~information for valuation of a facility~~ the energy-related asset comprises a power generating facility, and the information provided by the customer describing the energy-related asset includes at least one of the plant size, a heat rate, a percentage of revenues under contract, a number of years remaining under contract, a remaining term of the existing debt, an outstanding principal, interest rate, electricity prices and an annual rate of increase, and projections of prices and projected fuel costs including an escalator.

50. (original) Apparatus according to Claim 49 wherein information for valuation of a facility comprises default values for at least one of electricity prices and projected fuel prices.

51. (original) Apparatus according to Claim 45 wherein said means for prompting the customer to provide information comprises means for displaying a computer generated screen listing a plurality of questions, including at least one of background questions and financing specific questions relating to the customers financing requirement.

52. (previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 51 wherein the background questions comprise at least one of the country where financing is required, which energy related business is the financing for, is the financing required for an operating asset, are U.S. taxes currently being paid by the customer, is the customer interested in either of off-balance sheet or non-recourse financing, and is the customer interested in structured debt such as high yield debt or subordinated debt.

53. (previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 51 wherein the financing specific questions comprise at least one of amount of financing, selling or optimizing equity position, willing to share control, upside potential and residuals of the asset, willing to subordinate equity distribution to a preferred equity investor, willing to be contacted regarding the financing, early stage pre-IPO company or company in early stage of corporate

cycle and interested in financing senior to common equity but junior to lenders and trade creditors.

54. (withdrawn) A system for facilitating financing transactions for one or more power generation plants, said system comprising:

a database comprising data corresponding to available financing type selections for power generation plants; and

a server configured to prompt a customer to provide answers to questions relating to power generation plant financing requirements.

55. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 54 wherein said database further comprises data corresponding to answers to at least one of background questions and financing specific questions relating to the customers financing requirement.

56. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 54 wherein said server is configured to cause a screen listing a plurality of available financing type selections to be displayed at a client computer.

57. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 56 wherein the financing type selections comprise at least one of project finance, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.

58. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 57 wherein for a project common equity financing type, said server causes to be displayed at a client computer a screen prompting the customer to enter criteria to value the equity in their power generation plants.

59. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 58 wherein said server is configured to generate a valuation of equity in one or more power generation plants based upon customer entered criteria.

60. (withdrawn) A system according to Claim 58 wherein the valuation criteria for the power generation plants includes at least one of the plant size, a heat rate, a percentage of

revenues under contract, a number of years remaining under contract, a remaining term of the existing debt, an outstanding principal, interest rate, electricity prices and an annual rate of increase, and projections of prices and projected fuel costs including an escalator.

61. (withdrawn) A computer-readable medium, comprising:

a record of customer submitted facility data;

a plurality of rules for calculating equity in a facility, based upon customer submitted data; and

a record of results from applying said rules to the customer submitted data.

62. (withdrawn) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 61 wherein said rules for calculating equity comprise rules based upon at least one of plant size, a heat rate, a percentage of revenues under contract, a number of years remaining under contract, a remaining term of the existing debt, an outstanding principal, interest rate, electricity prices and an annual rate of increase, and projections of prices and projected fuel costs including an escalator.

63. (withdrawn) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 61 comprising a record of financing type selections comprising at least one of project finance, high yield debt, leasing, project common equity, limited partnership, private equity and preferred equity.